

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Madison 6

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

February 7, 1957

Dear Luca:

*Carbon copy  
air mail!*

Again I must apologize for being such a poor correspondent, but I think you may be able to sympathize with my excuses. I had had all kinds of good intentions about working on our book over Christmas, and since then, and had good reason to believe it should be possible, since the main burdens of paper-writing had finally ended. [I am, however, preoccupied more than I had expected with the review on 'Recombination' which has evolved into a monograph, and looks now as if it will be a small book all to itself. This is proceeding fairly satisfactorily, though at the expense of other obligations].

However, since early December, I have been deeply preoccupied with these very serious issues. Tatum had resigned from Stanford University, partly for personal reasons— as he has just remarried— and to take a post at the Rockefeller Institute in N.Y. The Department of Biology there then enquired whether I would be interested in the vacant position, and Esther and I felt we had to investigate this. This was therefore the occasion for our very exhilarating 'vacation' trip to California— I hope you will have received some of the postcard evidence. While we were there, however, the University of California also picked up the scent, and we soon received an extremely attractive offer from Berkeley, in the Genetics Department. We have by no means made up our minds, and there have been some residual problems that are approaching solution (e.g. the conditions for Esther's working, which was in possible conflict with some legislation, and problems of laboratory facilities). These negotiations, and the worry of decision, have exhausted almost all of my energies. I am very anxious that we should make a conclusive decision before the end of this month, as I do not want this concern to follow us on our travels. That is not quite all: there are some very exciting prospects here now for a new Department of Medical Genetics, which would be conceived in a fashion we both dream of, namely as a fundamental medical science embracing Experimental work with microorganisms and laboratory animals no less than physiological and population studies on man. To repeat, we have not made up our minds on these alternatives, but we must, for example, face the very real possibility that we may be moving to California. (However, this would not be before July '58). You can imagine the turmoil into which these affairs have thrown our plans amidst our preparations for travel. It is no simple matter for us to make even preliminary plans for moving— we have to consider space, facilities and support for up to 12 people, and to try to preserve continuity of working conditions at least for them, if not for myself.

I could not help but feel certain pangs at reading your letter of Dec. 29 when we had returned from Berkeley on New Years. Quite selfishly, I am glad to observe your renewed interest in a position in the U.S., though I very much regret the conditions that impel it. However, it is obvious that in order to press such an appointment at long distance, you will have to rely on the good offices of many local agents. The present confusion of my own

affairs simply points to a multiplicity of possible opportunities, and in this state of ~~immense~~ high entropy (the usual laws of thermodynamics being reversed in these affairs, as the crystalline states are the least likely to be altered) I have no doubt there will be opportunities that would be quite attractive to yourself. The more so, as you have innumerable friends in the U.S. to help prepare the way.

Such developments do not, however, proceed of their own accord and especially because of your distance you will have to take a more active part in them, both personally and by proxy. The most favorable opportunity would arise if you could arrange to revisit the U.S., say for a year, so as to be 'on the spot'. Whether here, or at Berkeley or Palo Alto, I would be delighted if you could be our guest again. I do not think that funds for your temporary support would be a problem — it is much less than you should have as a regular salary, say, but with a few months notice I am confident we could get something like \$5500-6000 set aside for you for a one-year's associateship. And I do not doubt that similar temporary expedients would be possible at any of a number of other institutions that you might use as a base.

On the other hand, it might be possible to evoke some more immediate reactions, e.g., among the 2/3 vacancies that I will know to be open in a short time (I have not mentioned, further, such things as a resuscitation of the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia, which will become a first-class Cell Biology Research Institute, e.g., with Billingham and I hear possibly George Klein: the director, who has become a good friend, also wanted (me) a bacterial geneticist). To exploit these, and other possibilities, it would of course be much better if you were nearby, but meanwhile it would help if I could have a dossier (curriculum vitae; bibliography & perhaps a few sets of outstanding reprints; photographs; list of references) that could reinforce any suggestions I or others could make. I am anxious to discuss this in greater detail with you (v.i.) but it would be very helpful if you could send such material posthaste for immediate use. If, for example, we went to Berkeley, it would be a delight to us if you were at Stanford (which is about 30 mi. away). However, it would be wrong for me to encourage your hopes unduly, as there are very substantial problems against such tele-local approaches.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have just gotten to read your Chapter II, and it was a heart-(and mind!) warming experience. I really have to congratulate you for your ability to strike the right balance of simplicity and information in this kind of presentation. There is very little I would want to change in it, and what there is can better be gone over in person. There are a few minor syntactical errors, but by and large it is excellent scientific prose, not to mention a well organized ensemble of ideas. If this is the pattern of the book, there will be no doubt of its value. I will put some immediate comments on a separate page.

Now we do have a great deal to talk over: I just wish we could manage to visit you in Italy this trip, but that seems out of the question. Here is our itinerary: -- no better, I have put it on a separate sheet so it can be replicated. \*\*\* Now, during the meetings at Glasgow and the Ciba, we are not going to have a great deal of free time. Would it be possible for us to meet in London, around the 15th-17th? If you would, you could help show us the city, and we would have the best occasion for les tetes-a-tetes we need. We could also fly up to Glasgow together. You know, the CIBA foundation would probably house you for those days, as well as for the symposium, if you let them know in advance you want to make more extensive scientific visits. Please do it.

Yours, as ever,

